

annually. The Food Pantry Network is comprised of 128 member congregations representing a variety of faiths. These willing volunteers provide the much needed food and service hours. In addition to its faithful volunteers, the Food Pantry Network also benefits from the very generous donations and assistance of individuals, businesses, and non-member congregations.

Mr. Speaker, I commend The Des Moines Area Religious Council Food Pantry Network on their 40 years of service to food insecure citizens of Central Iowa. Their vital assistance over the last 40 years has given families the certainty they need as they struggle to provide themselves and their children with a warm meal in the comfort of their own home. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating the Food Pantry Network on this outstanding accomplishment and in wishing them nothing but continued success.

RECOGNIZING FAMILIES AFFECTED BY THE NATIONAL OPIOID EPIDEMIC

HON. ANN M. KUSTER

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 8, 2016

Ms. KUSTER. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to include in the RECORD today the personal stories of families from across the country that have been affected by the opioid and heroin epidemic. In the U.S. we lose 129 lives per day to opioid and heroin overdose. In my home state of New Hampshire I have learned so many heartbreaking stories of great people and families who have suffered from the effects of substance use disorder.

Earlier this year, my colleagues and I were joined by many of these courageous families who came to Washington to share their stories with Members of Congress and push for action that will prevent overdoses and save lives. Since then, we passed both the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act and the 21st Century Cures Act to provide much needed funding and critical policy changes to fight this epidemic.

The advocacy of these families truly is so important to leading to change in Washington and I am proud to preserve their stories.

JOHN RICHARD PAGE—GLOUCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS

John Richard Page was a blond-haired, blue-eyed boy who loved playing in the woods and catching any critter that crossed his path. He was a ball of energy: curious, adventurous and fast! The kids in the neighborhood called him "Scrawny Johnny," because by the day's end he'd burnt off every calorie consumed—and some. He could be reckless, too. One time he bolted across the street without looking and got bumped by a car. He landed under the bumper just inches from the tires. Another time John was stuck in a tree hanging upside down from one boot.

As the teenage years rolled in, John started to get in some trouble. It seemed like he was always at the wrong place at the wrong time. He tended to take things to the limit, if he did something he did it all the way. John and his sister fought all of the time at this point.

When John and his sister stopped showing up at school, a Child In Need of Services

(CHINS) action was filed and my mother was told that because she couldn't control her kids they should be placed elsewhere. John's sister was almost 15 and ended up living in three different foster homes. John, who was only twelve, was placed in Juvenile Detention Centers around Boston. John quickly learned how to manipulate the system; if he got tired of being there or afraid of a particular social situation, he would act out—say he heard voices or was suicidal—and they would transfer him to a mental hospital and put him on medication. The swing between hospital and detention center went on for about five years.

When John returned home, little by little his family learned what had happened during his time away. John got in fights that were so severe that he had to have various MRI's to ensure that he didn't have a brain injury. He was abused by the staff. He was treated like a guinea pig at the mental hospital and put on a variety of powerful medications. John's experience changed him forever. He came back furious, distrustful, and reliant upon substances for emotional relief.

Despite being very bright, John never received his GED and had trouble getting work. He could fix any vehicle or cell phone. He could build with wood but preferred intricate projects that focused on small detail with a lot of parts. His sister thinks that's what John's mind felt like—a mix of gears, buttons, wires, sensors, nuts & bolts constantly being reassembled. He was also a talented artist.

John found peace while camping in the White Mountains in Lincoln, NH. He also found peace alone in his apartment with heroin. His sister tried everything she could to help him get better. At one point in time, when John was being treated with suboxone, his sister would drive 40 minutes to pick him up and take him to all of his doctor appointments. Sometimes John's girlfriend came along and when she did she always sat up front and answered questions that were directed towards John. When John's sister asked him why he sat in the back, he said, "Heidi, I just didn't want you to see me this way."

John made some attempts to get better. Once he tried to check himself into detox but was turned away because he didn't test positive for heroin. This meant John was injecting pure fentanyl. John and his girlfriend tried to detox together by coming to stay with his sister and her boys after Christmas 2015. She left after one day, but John stayed for 11 days. John wasn't too sick. His sister bought him an assortment of comfort medications and looked up a slew of at-home detox ideas. They went tanning. John got a haircut. John's sister did his laundry and bought him a new outfit. Over the course of those days, John apologized often and spent a lot of time hanging out with his nephews. John's sister took tons of pictures during his stay—she was running on hope.

During that time, John found out that his girlfriend of 2½ years didn't leave just because she wasn't ready to get better, but also because she was seeing someone else—the father of his youngest nephew. John was devastated, although he wouldn't admit it. His sister took him to a court appointment and then to a doctor's appointment. After those appointments, John wanted to go home. His sister thought John's decision was the wrong decision but she couldn't physically restrain him.

John's sister talked to him on the phone the night John went home as well as the next night. The following night, John made plans to see his ex-girlfriend. John's ex-girlfriend called John's sister at midnight but wasn't making any sense. John's sister hung up and dialed 911, where she was trans-

ferred to the Marblehead police department who took her information and told her told she would get a call back. A minute later, Detective Brendan Finnegan called John's sister and said six words that haunts her daily: "I am sorry for your loss." John's sister fell to the floor and couldn't speak. Her 7 year old son was still awake. He shut off the oven, grabbed two pot holders and ever so carefully took the banana bread out of the oven. He placed it on top of the stove and sat down next to her on the floor, holding my hand.

John's sister misses her brother every single day. On some days she is angry, on others she is sad. John's mother is forever broken. John's middle nephew lost his dad the same way three years before "Uncle Johnny's" death. When the nephew found out, he punched a hole in the bathroom wall, sobbed uncontrollably, swore, kicked the trash barrel until it broke and when he was exhausted just cried in his mother's arms.

John's family has used this awful experience to help teach and educate others about how serious this problem is. Their family will never be OK. Losing a loved one has been the hardest thing John's family has ever experienced. John was 33 years old when he passed away on January 29, 2016.

JOHN M. PERKINS, JR.—NEWARK, DELAWARE

John's mother was thrilled when her first child was a boy. She named him John after his father and grandfather. He was an adorable, active baby who climbed out of his crib early and managed to get into everything. That amazing store of energy never left him; John always pushed to do a little bit better, run faster, jump higher. He did well in school and was the life of the party.

When John got to college, a series of stressful events lead him to begin experimenting with drugs with friends at "pill parties" (various kinds of drugs are tossed into a bowl and taken at random). He began using opiate pain relievers like Percocet and Oxycontin.

John and his mother had a close relationship and she was shocked when she found out that he was addicted to drugs. "He was smart and had his whole life ahead of him," she said. "I couldn't believe this was happening to us. I felt scared and alone." Liz spent every waking minute trying to get him help and educating herself about the disease of addiction.

During a period of sobriety, John came home one night upset because someone had hit his parked car. His mother tried to calm him down, but he was inconsolable and went straight to his room. When his mother heard his car pulling out of the driveway minutes later, her stomach sank. The next morning John said, "Mom, I fucked up again." Despite being furious and terrified, his mother held him and told him that she loved him and that he would have to fight addiction for the rest of his life. She was right there with him.

A few days later, John's mother got a call from John's girlfriend who was in hysterics. She had come home from work and found John unconscious on the bathroom floor. She called 911 and an ambulance had taken him to the hospital. Liz and her husband rushed to the ER but it was too late to say goodbye. John was on life support for 36 hours before being pronounced dead on May 5, 2011. He was only 30 years old.

When Liz lost John, her life lost all of its meaning but her other child and husband helped her to carry on. According to Liz, losing a child to a drug overdose is made all the more difficult because the sympathy that most parents receive after going through such a loss is too often replaced with judgement, accusations, and silence.

After losing John, Liz realized she couldn't keep quiet about her experience. In writing John's obituary, his family was open about his struggles with addiction. Liz and her husband played a vital role in the passing of the Good Samaritan Law in Delaware and continue to tell their story and fight to end the epidemic. By sharing their experience, they hope to bring substance abuse into the public consciousness.

MARK ALLEN PERRIN—MIAMI, FLORIDA

Mark Allen Perrin was born in Miami, Florida, and was raised in Fort Lauderdale. When he was born, Mark was a beautiful, curly headed blonde baby boy, with hazel green eyes.

Mark loved movies. He could tell you all of the actors by name and could imitate their voices and characters. Mark grew up to become quite a character himself. He had the wit of Jim Carrey and Robin Williams combined. Mark was also a people person and could draw anyone in; especially his friends who would always flock to him.

Mark aspired to be a dancer and he had the moves for it as well. His mother would always tell him he should be on stage, but rather as an actor because he could cry on cue, was a master manipulator, and he had the look for it—every girl would do a double take when they crossed his path.

On January 19, 2016, Mark died from an accidental heroin overdose. He was just released from jail five days prior after being held for 44 days. Mark went into jail with two oxycodone pills hidden in his boxers. Upon his release he entered a sober house, and ingested those pills. His mother received a call on his first night at the sober house, telling her that she had to go pick Mark up because he tested positive on his drug test. The next morning she picked Mark up and took him to the emergency room.

Mark had to appear in court as a result. The judge ordered mandatory entry into a drug treatment facility, or he would not be able to have a bail bond. Mark promised to go if his mother let him come home, take a shower, and spend \$25 on snacks. Instead, he spent \$190 on drugs, without her knowledge. When his mother found out about his drug purchase with her money, she said, "Mark, this is the last time you will steal from me." Well, it was the last time.

That night his mother felt Mark leaving this earth. She called and called, to no answer. Mark was found at 3 p.m. the next day—face down and stiff in his mother's bathroom.

JOSH POWELL—EAST HAVEN, CONNECTICUT

Josh Powell was an amazing brother, uncle, son, and husband. He excelled at everything he did. In high school, Josh was an exceptional athlete and shined in both football and basketball. He also showed great passion for carpentry and became a master of the craft.

Josh's struggles began when he first started experimenting with alcohol and marijuana in high school. His experimentation continued through his twenties, but later he managed to straighten himself out. Josh started his own construction company; which became very successful. Josh was adored by all his customers and employees. He would always go out of his way to help anyone in need without any hesitation.

Josh had to undergo surgery and he was prescribed opiates to help manage the pain. Soon after, his behavior began to change. Josh became secretive and dismissive—a complete stranger.

Opioids robbed Kelly of her beloved husband. She watched Josh disappear into a world of lies, theft, and desperation; things she didn't think were possible. It broke her heart. On July 18, 2015, Josh lost his battle

with opioid addiction. He died from intoxication of heroin laced with fentanyl, just 18 months after being prescribed opiates from his surgery. Josh was 37 years old.

JUSTIN MICHAEL PRATT—CHERRY, ILLINOIS

Justin was his family's youngest and only son. He was a cute, blonde-haired boy who could make you mad one minute and laugh the next. "Buddy," as he was known to friends and family, enjoyed fishing, snowmobiling, boating, four-wheeling and bonfires.

On November 11, 2011, Justin died from a heroin overdose. He was 26 years old when a friend found him dead in his apartment. Justin had struggled with addiction for over 10 years. He never wanted to talk about how bad it was and distanced himself from his family when he was actively using. His mother believes he had an undiagnosed mental illness, as he often struggled in school and other structured environments. It was due to this struggle that Justin began to self medicate—it was his misguided attempt to cope.

One of the saddest aspects about Justin's addiction was how it eventually turned him into someone he never wanted to become and whom others didn't want to be around. His family held onto the hope that Justin would defeat his demons someday and go on to live a healthy and fulfilling life. On that fall day when he was found dead, that hope vanished and his family's life changed forever. Justin is missed every minute of everyday!

MICHAEL RAGONE—CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA

Michael Ragone struggled with heroin addiction for over 10 years. He died on January 17, 2016, of an accidental overdose in his hometown of Charlotte, NC, while visiting from Phoenix Arizona. He was 30 years old.

Michael loved fishing, football, poker, jokes, his girlfriend, family and friends. He was hysterically funny—his sense of humor was sarcastic and edgy. He used to sing songs in Italian that he had memorized. He could light up a room with his smile and big personality.

Michael was ashamed of his addiction and always thought he could beat it on his own. One of his last texts to his mother was,

"love u 2 Moms . . . Don't let fear control you . . . I know how bad this sounds but I promise I will not make you bury me. I'm going to outlive u."

He didn't mean to leave his family. It was an accident. Again, he was lured by a cunning drug that destroys impulse control. Again, he was crushed under the shame and stigma of being addicted. He used alone and died alone.

JAMES ATTICUS JOHN-PAUL-GEORGE & RINGO RALLS—EMMAUS, PENNSYLVANIA

On August 17th, 2014, James Atticus John-Paul-George & Ringo Ralls, died alone in his bedroom of a heroin overdose. On August 16th, he was alive and making an 18 year old's plans: to retake the driver's permit test he had failed the week before, to get a job at the local tavern, and, to find an affordable music studio to record his rap demo.

Kids in town called him "Yung G"—short for 'Young Gun' or 'Young Ganja.' His reputation for extensive drug use was well-earned and paid for with numerous overdoses, drug-related injuries and repeated run-ins with the juvenile court system.

James' problems began when his father was diagnosed with cancer and died just two months later in their home. James was only 10 years old. Their father's death blew the Ralls family apart; James' older stepbrothers scattered and James and his mother moved from New York to Emmaus, Pennsylvania.

James didn't have any mental health or juvenile delinquency issues in New York, but when we moved to Emmaus he was introduced to marijuana by some older kids in town. At the age of 12, James became the youngest person ever to be expelled from the East Penn School District, where his mother had once graduated with honors. He was caught buying \$5 worth of marijuana for a friend at school.

That same year, James began attending an outpatient drug and alcohol program and seeing a therapist, as well as a psychiatrist, who diagnosed him with PTSD, depression, bipolar disorder (triggered by his depression medication), anxiety and polysubstance dependence. He was repeatedly hospitalized overnight for overdoses on various substances. In the fall of 2011, when James was 15, a sympathetic probation officer helped his mother strong-arm him into a treatment center, with the threat of lock-up if he didn't stay until his counselors felt he was ready to return home.

This turned out to be a miracle. Within four short months, James went from being immersed in drug culture to someone committed to recovery. He remained enthusiastically, happily sober until July 7, 2012, his late father's birthday, when James was struck in the foot by illegal fireworks that were being shot off at a pool party. The firework blew up in his sneaker and caused 2nd and 3rd degree burns. In the ER, James told the doctors that he had a substance abuse disorder and begged them not to use fentanyl, for fear of relapse. Despite this warning, he was forced to take various pain medications and hypnotic agents while undergoing medical treatment for his foot injury.

Six weeks after finishing his prescribed round of pain medications, James began to relapse into the abuse of illicit substances, which triggered further arrests, hospitalizations, another week in treatment, which he refused to stay, and in March of 2013, a synthetic acid overdose that landed him in the hospital with facial lacerations (from banging his head against a wall) and a broken collarbone (from a police officer wrestling him into an ambulance).

Miraculously, James did manage to get sober again, but his will to fight was depleted and he suffered repeated relapses until August 16th, when he and a fellow member of Narcotics Anonymous smoked heroin on the back porch of his mother's home while she was asleep. When his mother went to wake him up the next morning, he was gone—dead in his bed. Less than six months later the other young man died of a heroin overdose as well. His body was found on the bathroom floor of a local hotel.

JENNIFER REYNOLDS—SPENCER, INDIANA

In January 2009, a Pinellas County Deputy showed up at Sharon Blair's door and delivered the news that her daughter, Jennifer Reynolds, had died of a drug overdose. Jennifer was a bright, fun, and loving individual. She enjoyed cheerleading, speed skating and softball. She was very creative and artistic. Jennifer enjoyed staying current with fashion, hair, makeup and nails. She wanted to be a fashion designer and makeup artist. Jennifer was a delightful sister, daughter, friend and mother to her only son, Trey. As Jennifer battled her Substance Use Disorder, her passion shifted and she desired to help others who were also struggling with the same disease. She felt it takes one who has experienced it, to really know what addiction is all about and help people. Jennifer was very close to her mother and together, they fought a gallant battle to get to the other side of her addiction. However, the day of recovery never came. Sadly, Jennifer died January 15, 2009 in Largo, Florida.

Fueled by the pain of her loss and anger over what she felt was a preventable death, Jennifer's mother has spent the past seven years working as a social justice advocate and pushing the Jennifer Act, a bill named after her daughter, that would empower families to help loved ones who are struggling with addiction.

Jennifer Reynolds had been struggling with an addiction to prescription pills for over a decade before her death. Over the course of that time, Sharon Blair sought the state's help and filed five different petitions under the Marchman Act, which allows for the involuntary treatment of substance abusers for three days. Only one of the petitions was granted, and 72 hours wasn't enough time to help her daughter. According to Sharon, "Jennifer was dying in front of me."

DOMENIC & VINCENT ROSA—SEABROOK, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Domenic and Vincent Rosa were the oldest of six children. They were good sons, brothers, cousins and friends. They both had big hearts and were remarkably compassionate people. They did mixed martial arts, skateboarded, cooked, played ice hockey for many years and taught skating clinics to kids who adored them. They were decent students and most importantly, they were respectful. They both began battling with substance abuse at the age of 14. They would manage to be "good" for a while—trying to manage their demons—before falling down again. Both boys eventually lost the fight.

Their family considers themselves blessed to have known Domenic and Vincent and are grateful for their short stay with them. They both gave their family the guidance to help others.

After losing his two eldest sons, Chucky Rosa vowed to make a difference through awareness and education. In an effort to reach those who are suffering from addiction or trying to help a loved one, he visits schools and treatment centers to tell his story and educate young audiences about the dangers of substance abuse. If Chucky can save at least one child by sharing his experience of loss, strength and hope, it is all worth it.

Domenic and Vincent were cremated and their family spread their ashes into the ocean. Now, Chucky wakes up each morning and takes a dip in the sea, regardless of the weather. He starts his day with both of them.

JESSICA MARY MILLER—GLENSHAW, PENNSYLVANIA

Jessica Mary Miller died at the age of 31. Jessica struggled with addiction for 15 years and was also afflicted with severe mental illness.

Jessica died at the hands of her mentally ill boyfriend. She had been in the relationship for only five months and thought she found the "love" of her life. Jessica had been doing much better than she had been in the past, and her mother was hopeful she may be ready to overcome her struggles with addiction. But like many women who battle addiction, she desired a partner who would make her feel worthy and wanted. It didn't matter what they looked like, how old they were, or what they provided financially—she just needed assurance from a romantic relationship.

One night, after Jessica's boyfriend's unemployment check came in, they got into a fight about how the money was going to be spent. Her mother only assumes this was the main argument from the phone call she got from Jessica that night. After they spoke on the phone at approximately 10 PM, the police were at Jessica's mother's door at 5 AM to tell her Jessica had been strangled and was

found outside the steps of her apartment. At first, the police told her mother that Jessica died by suicide but the boyfriend was later charged and convicted for murder by strangulation and is now serving 25 years in jail.

Jessica's mother is writing to show that not only drug overdoses are killing our children, but also the fallout of both drug use and mental instability. Not only girlfriends or spouses, but the innocent children who can't fend for themselves when their parents are so engulfed in their addiction.

It has been three years since Jessica's death and there isn't a day that goes by that her mother doesn't think of her. Many might find this strange, but her mother does not hate the person who took Jessica's life, as he is just as sick as Jessica was. They chose to be together and she knew what he was like, and chose to stay. A mentally healthy person would not put herself in that position. This was not Jessica's only bad romantic relationship, they were all bad, and her addiction drove her from one bad relationship to another.

STEVE RAUKAR: TIRELESS
ADVOCATE FOR THE NORTHLAND

HON. RICHARD M. NOLAN

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 8, 2016

Mr. NOLAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Steve Raukar of Kelly Lake, Minnesota for his 33 years of exceptional public service. Steve will be retiring from the St. Louis County, Minnesota Board of County Commissioners this January, and having worked with Steve on many projects in the Northland I want to wish him the very best in his much deserved retirement. In every one of Steve's many roles he goes above and beyond to ensure residents of Northeastern Minnesota receive the best possible services from St. Louis County.

Steve and I have worked together on many projects across St. Louis County, from an expansion project at the Port of Duluth/Superior to Federal funding issues at the Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency, to the proposed Northern Lights Express Minneapolis to Duluth/Superior passenger rail line. He is a tireless advocate for his constituents and throughout his career has improved the lives of countless Minnesotans.

Steve is retiring from the St. Louis County Board of County Commissioners after serving 28 years on the board. Prior to that he served on the Hibbing school board and on the staff of then Minnesota Lt. Governor Rudy Perpich. He is no stranger to hard work and even after retirement will continue to serve on several boards of other organizations in the region.

I ask my colleagues in Congress to join me in recognizing Commissioner Steve Raukar for his career of dedicated service to residents of Northeastern Minnesota.

COMMEMORATING THE LIFE OF
MRS. LUPITA CORTEZ

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 8, 2016

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the life of one of Laredo's most passionate educators, Lupita Cortez.

Mrs. Cortez was born in Laredo, Texas on the 16th of February in 1956 to Teresa and Vicente Gutierrez. After graduating high school in 1974, she earned a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education from Texas A&M—Kingsville and a Master of Science in Educational Administration from Texas A&M International University. Her passion for learning led her to dedicate her life to teaching the children of Laredo through the Laredo Independent School District, where she worked to better students' lives for over 35 years.

Mrs. Cortez's devotion to the school district led her to assume the role of principal at the elementary, middle and high school levels. She ended her career in education at Don Jose Gallego Elementary School, a school given its name to appreciate and honor the contributions of her very own grandfather. Throughout her life and career, Mrs. Cortez, was always held in high regard because of her unwavering belief in love and selflessness, as well as her steadfast leadership. Through a combination of optimism and strong will, Mrs. Cortez worked hard to bring out the best in everyone in her company. This extended to her children as well, who have gone on to excel in the fields of education, medicine and law. She held herself to the highest of standards in both her professional and personal life, and this was reflected in the way that she interacted with those around her: treating everyone with the utmost kindness and respect.

Mrs. Cortez is survived by her parents, Teresa and Vicente Gutierrez; siblings, Vicente (Gloria) Gutierrez, Jr., Teresita Gutierrez, Margie Gutierrez, Javier (Elvira) Gutierrez and Nora (Ernesto) Meza; husband, Oscar Cortez; and children, Christine Alyson Cortez, James Vincent Cortez, M.D., Leslie Ann Cortez and Oscar Cortez, Jr. Her legacy will remain strong through the seeds of hope, wisdom and endurance that she planted in those around her. The mentoring and guidance that she provided will persevere throughout the community she touched. Her passion for serving others through her love of education will not be forgotten, and her dedication to her work is a model that all should strive to emulate.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to have the opportunity to remember the legacy of Lupita Cortez.

IN HONOR OF 100 YEARS OF ACTIVISM BY THE WOMEN'S CITY CLUB OF NEW YORK

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 8, 2016

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to the Women's City Club of New York (WCCNY) in recognition of a century of activism. Committed to giving women a voice, WCCNY has been a leading advocate for women's rights and equality.

In 1915, women in New York still could not vote, but they took their citizenship very seriously. After realizing that they would soon gain the ballot, 100 suffragettes gathered in New York City to found WCCNY as a place where they could learn about issues and influence public policy. These women wasted no time in tackling the complex problems of their day,